

What Shapes Leadership? A Systematic Literature Review Of Communication, Interaction, And Social Construction Perspectives

Apa Yang Membentuk Kepemimpinan? Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis Tentang Perspektif Komunikasi, Interaksi, Dan Konstruksi Sosial

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review examines what shapes leadership through the lenses of communication, interaction, and social construction. Drawing on interdisciplinary scholarship from leadership studies and communication theory, the review synthesizes research that conceptualizes leadership not as an individual trait or positional authority, but as a dynamic, relational, and communicative process. Using a systematic search and screening procedure, the study analyzes key theoretical and empirical contributions that emphasize meaning-making, interactional practices, discourse, and socially constructed realities in leadership processes. The findings indicate that leadership emerges through ongoing communication, including sensemaking, framing, dialogue, and negotiated interactions among leaders, followers, and broader stakeholders. Rather than residing solely in individuals, leadership is shown to be co-constructed within social contexts shaped by language, power relations, cultural norms, and organizational settings. This review highlights a shift from leader-centric models toward relational, distributed, and process-oriented perspectives, underscoring communication as constitutive of leadership itself. The study contributes to leadership scholarship by integrating communication and social construction perspectives into a coherent framework, offering implications for future research and leadership development practices that prioritize interaction, reflexivity, and collective meaning-making in complex organizational and social environments.

Keywords: Leadership, Communication, Social Construction, Interaction, Meaning-Making, Relational Leadership, Discourse, Systematic Literature Review

ABSTRAK

Tinjauan literatur sistematis ini menganalisis faktor-faktor yang membentuk kepemimpinan melalui perspektif komunikasi, interaksi, dan konstruksi sosial. Dengan mengacu pada penelitian interdisipliner dari studi kepemimpinan dan teori komunikasi, tinjauan ini mensintesis penelitian yang memandang kepemimpinan bukan sebagai sifat individu atau otoritas posisional, melainkan sebagai proses dinamis, relasional, dan komunikatif. Menggunakan prosedur pencarian dan penyaringan sistematis, studi ini menganalisis kontribusi teoretis dan empiris utama yang menekankan pembentukan makna, praktik interaksi, diskursus, dan realitas sosial yang dibangun dalam proses kepemimpinan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan muncul melalui komunikasi berkelanjutan, termasuk pembentukan makna, pengkaderan, dialog, dan interaksi yang dinegosiasikan antara pemimpin, pengikut, dan pemangku kepentingan yang lebih luas. Alih-alih hanya berada pada individu, kepemimpinan terbukti dibangun bersama dalam konteks sosial yang dibentuk oleh bahasa, hubungan kekuasaan, norma budaya, dan lingkungan organisasi. Tinjauan ini menyoroti pergeseran dari Model-model yang berpusat pada pemimpin menuju perspektif relasional, terdistribusi, dan berorientasi pada proses, dengan menekankan komunikasi sebagai unsur konstitutif dari kepemimpinan itu sendiri. Studi ini berkontribusi pada bidang studi kepemimpinan dengan mengintegrasikan perspektif komunikasi dan konstruksi sosial ke dalam kerangka kerja yang koheren, menawarkan implikasi untuk penelitian masa depan dan praktik pengembangan kepemimpinan yang memprioritaskan interaksi, refleksivitas, dan pembentukan makna kolektif dalam lingkungan organisasi dan sosial yang kompleks.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan, Komunikasi, Konstruksi Sosial, Interaksi, Pembentukan Makna, Kepemimpinan Relasional, Diskursus, Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis

1. Introduction

Leadership has long been a central topic in organizational, social, and behavioral sciences. Traditional leadership theories have predominantly conceptualized leadership as an individual attribute, focusing on traits, behaviors, styles, or decision-making capacities of formal leaders. While these perspectives have contributed valuable insights, they have been increasingly criticized for oversimplifying leadership as a leader-centric phenomenon and neglecting the social processes through which leadership actually unfolds in practice. Contemporary organizational realities characterized by complexity, uncertainty, distributed work, and dynamic social interactions demand a reconceptualization of leadership beyond individual authority and positional power. In response to these challenges, scholars have increasingly turned to communication, interactional, and social construction perspectives to better understand how leadership is formed, enacted, and sustained. From this viewpoint, leadership is not something leaders have, but something people do together through communication. Leadership emerges through everyday interactions, discourse, sensemaking processes, and shared interpretations of reality among organizational members. Language, symbols, narratives, and dialogue become central mechanisms through which influence is exercised and collective action is coordinated.

The communicative perspective on leadership emphasizes that leadership is inherently relational and processual. Influence is constructed through interactions between leaders and followers, rather than flowing unilaterally from the top down. This perspective aligns with social construction theory, which posits that social realities including leadership are continuously produced and reproduced through human interaction. Meaning-making processes, such as framing organizational issues, negotiating identities, and managing interpretations of change, are therefore fundamental to understanding leadership phenomena. Despite the growing body of literature addressing leadership as a communicative and socially constructed process, existing studies remain fragmented across disciplines and theoretical traditions. There is a lack of integrative reviews that systematically synthesize how communication, interaction, and social construction collectively shape leadership. Without such synthesis, theoretical development risks remaining siloed, limiting both scholarly advancement and practical application.

Accordingly, this study aims to address this gap by conducting a systematic literature review that explores the question: What shapes leadership from communication, interaction, and social construction perspectives? By synthesizing key theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, this review seeks to clarify how leadership emerges through communicative practices and social interactions, rather than through individual traits alone. The findings are expected to contribute to leadership theory by offering a more holistic and process-oriented understanding of leadership, while also providing practical implications for leadership development, organizational learning, and collaborative governance in contemporary contexts.

2. Literature Review

Leadership as a Communicative Process

Early leadership theories largely emphasized individual attributes such as traits, behaviors, and styles. However, scholars from communication studies argue that such approaches marginalize the central role of communication in shaping leadership. From a communicative perspective, leadership is fundamentally constituted through symbolic interaction, language use, and meaning exchange among organizational members. Communication is not merely a tool used by leaders but the very medium through which leadership emerges, is recognized, and sustained. Leadership communication research highlights that influence is enacted through discourse, narratives, framing, and conversational practices. Leaders shape realities by articulating visions, defining problems, and constructing shared meanings that guide collective action. Consequently, leadership effectiveness is closely

linked to communicative competence, including the ability to listen, negotiate meaning, manage ambiguity, and engage in dialogue rather than unilateral message transmission.

Interaction and Relational Perspectives on Leadership

Interactional and relational leadership theories challenge leader-centric assumptions by positioning leadership as a dynamic social process embedded in relationships. From this viewpoint, leadership arises through patterns of interaction among leaders, followers, and contextual actors rather than residing solely within individuals or formal roles. Leadership is therefore co-produced through reciprocal influence, shared understanding, and coordinated action. Relational leadership theory emphasizes that leadership is socially constructed within networks of interaction. Authority and influence are negotiated continuously through everyday encounters, such as meetings, informal conversations, and collaborative decision-making processes. This perspective aligns with distributed and shared leadership approaches, which recognize that leadership functions can shift across individuals depending on expertise, context, and situational demands. By focusing on interaction, these theories underscore that leadership is fluid, emergent, and context-dependent. Leadership effectiveness is not determined solely by individual capability, but by the quality of relationships, communication patterns, and interactional processes that enable collective sensemaking and action.

Social Construction of Leadership

Social construction theory provides a foundational lens for understanding leadership as a socially produced phenomenon. According to this perspective, leadership does not exist as an objective or fixed reality but is continuously constructed and reconstructed through social interaction and discourse. What counts as “leadership,” who is recognized as a “leader,” and how leadership is evaluated are all shaped by shared meanings, cultural norms, and institutional contexts. Leadership identities are formed through communicative practices such as labeling, storytelling, and discourse framing. Individuals become recognized as leaders not simply because of formal authority, but because others attribute leadership meaning to their actions through interaction. Similarly, followers actively participate in constructing leadership by accepting, resisting, or redefining influence attempts. This perspective also highlights the role of power and discourse in leadership construction. Language shapes whose voices are heard, which interpretations dominate, and how legitimacy is established. Leadership discourse can therefore both enable and constrain participation, reinforcing or challenging existing power relations within organizations and societies.

Sensemaking, Meaning-Making, and Leadership

Sensemaking theory further enriches communicative and social construction perspectives on leadership. Leadership plays a critical role in guiding collective sensemaking, particularly in situations of uncertainty, change, or crisis. Through communication, leaders and organizational members interpret ambiguous events, construct plausible explanations, and align actions accordingly. Meaning-making involves framing issues, legitimizing interpretations, and creating coherence among diverse viewpoints. Leadership emerges when individuals successfully facilitate shared understanding and coordinate collective responses. Importantly, sensemaking is an ongoing, interactive process rather than a one-time activity, reinforcing the view of leadership as emergent and processual.

The reviewed literature converges on the idea that leadership is shaped by communication, interaction, and social construction rather than individual traits alone. Leadership emerges through relational processes, discursive practices, and shared meaning-making embedded in specific social and organizational contexts. However, despite this growing body of work, existing studies are dispersed across disciplines and theoretical traditions. There

remains a need for integrative frameworks that systematically connect communicative, interactional, and social construction perspectives on leadership. A comprehensive synthesis is essential to advance theoretical clarity and to inform leadership development practices that emphasize dialogue, collaboration, and collective sensemaking. This systematic literature review seeks to address this gap by consolidating and critically examining how these perspectives collectively explain what shapes leadership in contemporary organizational and social settings.

Stock Investment Decision-Making among Young Investors

Stock investment decision-making refers to the process by which individuals evaluate information, assess risk, and choose whether and how to invest in stocks. For young investors, this process is often influenced not only by financial knowledge but also by psychological and behavioral factors. Digital platforms, social media, and peer communities further amplify the role of cognitive bias in shaping investment choices. Recent studies emphasize that young investors are more prone to behavioral biases than experienced investors. Baker et al. (2022) argue that limited financial experience combined with high information exposure increases susceptibility to overconfidence and distorted risk perception. Consequently, investment decisions among young investors are frequently driven by emotion and intuition rather than fundamental analysis. Given the growing participation of young investors in capital markets, understanding the behavioral determinants of their investment decisions is crucial. Integrating overconfidence and risk perception within a behavioral finance framework offers a more comprehensive explanation of young investors' stock investment decision-making processes.

Stock Investment Decision Making among Young Investors: A Psychological View

From the perspective of psychology, stock investment decision-making among young investors is a manifestation of broader cognitive and emotional processes. Young investors often approach investment as a domain for self-expression, achievement, and social validation. Their decisions are influenced not only by information processing but also by motivation, emotion, and identity-related factors. Psychological research indicates that young adults are more prone to sensation-seeking, optimism bias, and social comparison, all of which interact with overconfidence and risk perception. As a result, investment decisions may be driven more by perceived competence and emotional reinforcement than by rational evaluation. Understanding stock investment decision-making among young investors therefore requires an integrative psychological framework that accounts for cognitive bias, subjective risk evaluation, and developmental characteristics.

Psychological Relationship between Overconfidence and Risk Perception

Psychological theory suggests a strong inverse relationship between overconfidence and risk perception. Overconfidence reduces perceived risk by fostering an illusion of control, whereby individuals believe they can manage or predict uncertain outcomes better than others. This cognitive distortion suppresses awareness of potential losses and weakens emotional responses to risk. From a cognitive psychology perspective, overconfidence acts as a filtering mechanism that biases information processing. Overconfident individuals selectively.

3. Research Methods

Research Design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) combined with bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer to map, visualize, and synthesize the intellectual structure of leadership studies from communication, interaction, and social construction perspectives. The integration of SLR and VOSviewer allows not only transparent article selection but also objective

identification of dominant themes, research clusters, and theoretical linkages within the literature.

Data Source and Search Strategy

The literature data were retrieved from Scopus (primary database) due to its high-quality peer-reviewed coverage and compatibility with VOSviewer. The search was conducted using the following keyword combinations applied to titles, abstracts, and keywords:

1. "leadership" AND "communication"
2. "leadership" AND "interaction"
3. "leadership" AND "social construction"
4. "relational leadership" OR "discursive leadership"

The search was limited to Peer-reviewed journal articles, English language publications, Social sciences, management, and communication studies, Publication years aligned with contemporary leadership research

Article Selection Procedure (SLR Stages)

The article selection followed four systematic stages the article selection process in this study followed a systematic and transparent procedure to ensure the rigor, relevance, and reproducibility of the review. Consistent with the principles of Systematic Literature Review (SLR), the selection was conducted through four sequential stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

1. Identification

In the identification stage, all records retrieved from the selected academic database were exported in CSV and RIS formats to ensure compatibility with bibliometric software. The dataset was then imported into VOSviewer, which served as the primary tool for managing and analyzing the bibliographic data. At this stage, the dataset encompassed all potentially relevant publications related to leadership, communication, interaction, and social construction, without any initial exclusions. This comprehensive approach ensured that the review captured the broad intellectual landscape of the field.

2. Screening

The screening stage aimed to refine the dataset by removing irrelevant and duplicate records. Duplicate publications were identified and eliminated using VOSviewer's automated detection features, followed by manual verification to enhance accuracy. Subsequently, titles and abstracts were systematically reviewed to assess topical relevance. Articles were excluded if they focused exclusively on trait-based or behavioral leadership models without incorporating a communicative dimension, if they conceptualized leadership solely as formal authority or managerial control, or if they lacked explicit relevance to interactional or social construction perspectives. This stage significantly narrowed the dataset to studies that aligned with the conceptual focus of the review.

3. Eligibility

During the eligibility stage, the full texts of the remaining articles were examined in depth to ensure conceptual and theoretical alignment with the objectives of the study. Articles were considered eligible if they conceptualized leadership as a communicative, relational, or socially constructed process, and if they provided meaningful theoretical or empirical contributions to leadership scholarship. Particular attention was given to studies that explicitly addressed discourse, interaction, meaning-making, sensemaking, or relational dynamics as central elements of leadership. Articles that only mentioned communication tangentially or failed to engage with these perspectives substantively were excluded at this stage.

4. Inclusion

In the final inclusion stage, the selected articles formed the core dataset for analysis. These studies were included for two complementary analytical purposes. First, they were subjected to bibliometric mapping using VOSviewer, including keyword co-occurrence analysis, co-citation analysis, and thematic clustering, to visualize the intellectual structure and dominant research themes within the literature. Second, the articles were analyzed qualitatively to synthesize theoretical insights and interpret patterns of leadership emerging from communication and social construction perspectives. Together, these analyses provided a robust foundation for understanding how leadership is shaped through communicative and interactional processes.

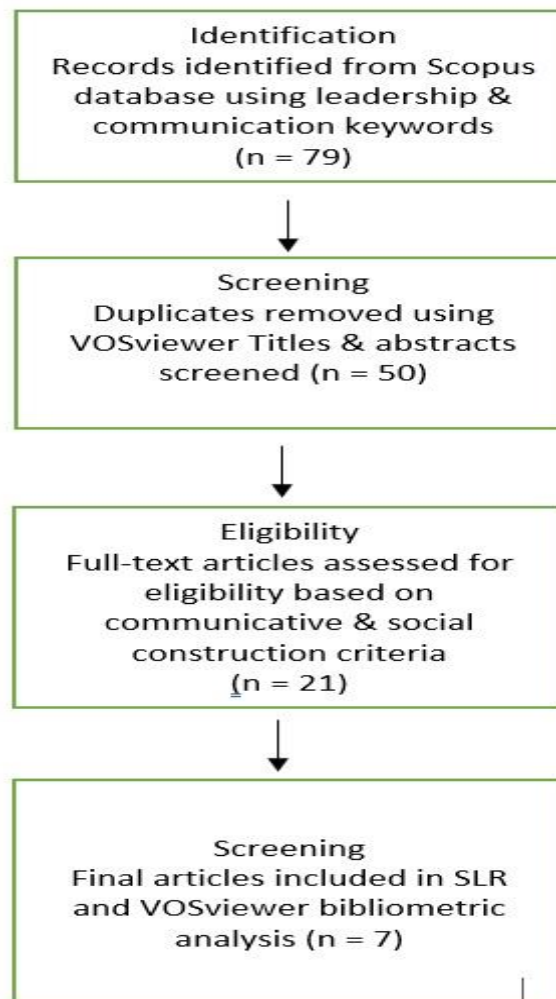


Figure 1. Flow Chart of Article Selection Process

4. Results and Discussions

Bibliometric Overview of the Literature

The bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer provides an overview of the intellectual structure of leadership studies from communication, interaction, and social construction perspectives. Based on the final dataset of selected articles, the analysis reveals a growing scholarly interest in non-leader-centric approaches to leadership, particularly in the last two decades. This trend reflects a paradigm shift away from traditional trait-based and behavioral leadership models toward more relational and process-oriented frameworks. Keyword co-occurrence analysis indicates that leadership is most frequently associated with terms such as

communication, relational leadership, discourse, sensemaking, social construction, and distributed leadership. The high frequency and strong link strength among these keywords suggest that leadership is increasingly conceptualized as a communicative and socially embedded phenomenon rather than an individual capability.

Thematic Clusters Identified through VOSviewer

The VOSviewer clustering algorithm identified several dominant thematic clusters, each representing a distinct but interconnected stream of leadership research.

Cluster 1: Leadership as Communication and Meaning-Making

This cluster centers on leadership as a process of meaning construction through language, symbols, and discourse. Studies in this cluster emphasize framing, narrative construction, sensemaking, and the management of meaning as core leadership activities. Leadership is understood as emerging through communicative acts that shape shared interpretations of organizational reality, particularly in contexts of uncertainty and change. These findings reinforce the argument that communication is not merely a leadership skill but the constitutive mechanism through which leadership exists.

Cluster 2: Relational and Interactional Leadership

The second cluster highlights leadership as a relational and interactional process. Research in this stream focuses on everyday interactions, dialogue, and reciprocal influence between leaders and followers. Leadership is viewed as co-produced within relationships rather than exercised unilaterally. This cluster aligns strongly with relational and distributed leadership theories, demonstrating that leadership functions are often shared, negotiated, and context-dependent.

Cluster 3: Social Construction and Discourse of Leadership

This cluster emphasizes leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by discourse, power relations, and institutional contexts. Studies in this stream examine how leadership identities are constructed through language, labeling, and social recognition processes. Leadership legitimacy is shown to depend on collective sensemaking and discursive acceptance rather than formal position alone. This cluster also highlights the role of discourse in reinforcing or challenging dominant power structures within organizations.

Integration of Bibliometric and Qualitative Findings

The qualitative synthesis of the reviewed articles complements the bibliometric findings by revealing how communication, interaction, and social construction jointly shape leadership processes. Across clusters, leadership consistently emerges as a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a static role. Communication functions as the medium through which leadership influence is enacted, relationships are formed, and shared meanings are negotiated. The findings suggest that leadership effectiveness is closely linked to the quality of interaction and the capacity to facilitate collective sensemaking. Leaders and followers jointly construct leadership through dialogic engagement, mutual interpretation, and coordinated action. This reinforces the view that leadership is inherently contextual and cannot be fully understood without considering the social and communicative environments in which it is embedded.

The final stage of the systematic literature review resulted in seven core articles that explicitly conceptualize leadership through communication, interaction, and social construction perspectives. Collectively, these studies represent a shift from leader-centric paradigms toward leadership as an emergent, relational, and communicative process. Several foundational studies emphasize that leadership cannot be separated from communication practices. Early integrative

work highlights the strong theoretical affinity between leadership and communication studies, arguing that leadership is enacted through symbolic interaction, rhetoric, and shared meaning-making. Leadership, from this perspective, is not a set of individual traits but a dramatistic and interactional process in which influence is constructed through language, narratives, and collective interpretation. These studies provide the conceptual groundwork for understanding leadership as a communicative phenomenon rather than a positional role.

Subsequent research extends this view by situating leadership within organizational and interactional contexts. Leadership is shown to emerge from patterns of interaction embedded in organizational systems, where communication enables coordination, sensemaking, and collective action. Rather than functioning as a linear transmission of directives, leadership communication is depicted as a dynamic, reciprocal process shaped by feedback, negotiation, and contextual constraints. These studies reinforce the idea that without communication, leadership cannot exist as a meaningful organizational process. A significant contribution of the reviewed literature lies in the development of a communicative perspective on leadership, which explicitly positions communication as constitutive rather than instrumental. Leadership is framed as relational, meaning-centered, and co-constructed through discourse. Studies in this stream argue that leadership influence arises through framing, sensemaking, and identity work, especially in complex and uncertain environments. Leadership legitimacy, therefore, depends less on formal authority and more on the ability to shape shared understanding through dialogue and discourse.

Another group of articles critically examines traditional leadership discourse and questions the necessity of leader-centric models. From a social construction standpoint, leadership is viewed as a product of discourse that reflects power relations, institutional norms, and cultural expectations. These studies argue that leadership is often sustained through myths of individual exceptionalism, while actual leadership practice is distributed across networks of interaction. By advocating distributed and relational forms of leadership, this literature challenges the dominance of hierarchical leadership narratives. The reviewed articles also contribute to leadership theory by emphasizing distributed and collective leadership. Leadership is conceptualized as a shared accomplishment that emerges across people, time, and situations. Influence is not monopolized by formal leaders but shifts dynamically depending on expertise, interactional context, and shared goals. This perspective aligns closely with social construction theory, highlighting that leadership is continuously negotiated and redefined through interaction. Finally, the selected studies underscore the importance of meaning-making and sensemaking as central leadership processes. Leadership emerges when individuals successfully guide collective interpretation of events, particularly during periods of change or ambiguity. Through discourse, leaders and followers co-create narratives that provide coherence and direction. This reinforces the view that leadership is an ongoing social process embedded in communication rather than a static attribute of individuals.

Synthesis of the Seven Articles

Taken together, the seven reviewed articles converge on three key insights. First, leadership is fundamentally communicative, enacted through language, symbols, and interaction rather than individual traits. Second, leadership is relational and interactional, emerging from reciprocal influence among organizational members. Third, leadership is socially constructed, shaped by discourse, power relations, and shared meanings within specific contexts. This synthesis demonstrates that what shapes leadership is not merely who the leader is, but how leadership is communicatively produced, negotiated, and sustained in social interaction. The findings provide strong theoretical support for rethinking leadership as an emergent social process, offering a coherent foundation for future leadership research and practice grounded in communication and social construction perspectives.

Table 4. Summary of Selected Articles Reviewed in the Systematic Literature Review

Author(s)	Year	Focus of Study	Method	Key Findings
Moffitt	2025	Integration of leadership and communication studies through a dramatic perspective	Conceptual literature review	Leadership is fundamentally a communicative and symbolic process enacted through interaction and rhetoric. Leadership emerges from shared meaning-making rather than individual traits or authority.
Steil	2021	Relevance of organizational theory to organizational communication	Conceptual and theoretical analysis	Communication is a prerequisite for organizational functioning; leadership arises from interaction within organizational systems rather than formal hierarchical control.
Gronn	2023	Critique of leader-centric leadership and advocacy of distributed leadership	Conceptual and critical analysis	Leadership is socially constructed and distributed across networks of interaction. The myth of individual leadership obscures collective and relational leadership practices.
Fairhurst & Connaughton	2024	Leadership from a communicative perspective	Systematic literature review	Leadership is constituted through communication, discourse, sensemaking, and relational processes. Influence is co-created through interaction rather than transmitted unidirectionally.
Banwart	2020	Contribution of communication studies to leadership development	Conceptual review with illustrative cases	Effective leadership is grounded in communicative competence, dialogue, and civic engagement. Communication education plays a central role in leadership formation.
Lang & Lang	2021	Development of communication theory and its implications for social processes	Historical and theoretical reflection	Communication constructs social reality and collective action. Leadership is embedded in broader communicative systems

			shaping social relationships and meaning.
Antonakis et al.	2023	Methodological foundations for studying leadership	Methodological and theoretical review
			Leadership is a complex social phenomenon requiring multi-level and process-oriented approaches. The study of leadership must account for interaction, context, and relational dynamics.

Collectively, these seven articles demonstrate that leadership is not an inherent attribute of individuals but an emergent social process shaped by communication, interaction, and shared meaning-making. The literature consistently challenges traditional trait-based models and supports a shift toward relational, distributed, and socially constructed conceptions of leadership.

Discussion: Rethinking What Shapes Leadership

The results of this study challenge traditional leadership assumptions that prioritize individual traits, authority, or formal roles. Instead, leadership is shaped by communicative practices, relational dynamics, and socially constructed meanings. The prominence of discourse, interaction, and sensemaking in the literature underscores that leadership is less about control and more about coordination, interpretation, and shared understanding. From a theoretical standpoint, these findings support a shift toward communication-centered and social constructionist leadership models. Leadership should be conceptualized as an emergent property of social systems rather than an attribute of individuals. This perspective integrates insights from communication studies, sociology, and organizational theory, offering a more holistic understanding of leadership in complex environments. From a practical perspective, the findings imply that leadership development should move beyond individual competency training to emphasize dialogic skills, relational awareness, and collective learning. Organizations that foster open communication, inclusive dialogue, and shared meaning-making are more likely to cultivate effective leadership processes.

5. Conclusion

The synthesis highlights several avenues for future research. First, empirical studies are needed to further examine how leadership emerges through micro-level interactions in diverse organizational and cultural contexts. Second, longitudinal and qualitative approaches can provide deeper insights into the dynamic and evolving nature of leadership construction over time. Finally, integrating bibliometric analysis with qualitative inquiry, as demonstrated in this study, offers a robust methodological approach for advancing leadership research. This study set out to examine what shapes leadership from communication, interaction, and social construction perspectives by employing a Systematic Literature Review combined with bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer. Based on the rigorous selection process, seven core articles were identified and synthesized to provide an in-depth understanding of leadership beyond traditional leader-centric frameworks.

The findings demonstrate that leadership is fundamentally a communicative and relational process rather than a fixed set of individual traits or formal authority. Across the reviewed studies, leadership consistently emerges through language, interaction, discourse, and collective meaning-making. Communication is not merely an instrument used by leaders, but the constitutive medium through which leadership is enacted, recognized, and legitimized

within social and organizational contexts. Furthermore, the review highlights that leadership is socially constructed through ongoing interactions shaped by power relations, cultural norms, and institutional settings. Leadership identities and influence are continuously negotiated and redefined through discourse, sensemaking, and relational dynamics among leaders and followers. This perspective challenges hierarchical and individualistic leadership models, reinforcing the relevance of distributed and collective forms of leadership in complex and dynamic environments.

The integration of bibliometric mapping and qualitative synthesis provides robust evidence of a paradigm shift in leadership studies toward process-oriented, interactional, and meaning-centered approaches. These insights contribute theoretically by bridging leadership studies with communication theory and social constructionism, offering a more holistic framework for understanding leadership as an emergent social phenomenon. From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that leadership development initiatives should prioritize dialogue, relational competence, and collective sensemaking rather than focusing solely on individual leadership skills. Organizations that cultivate open communication, shared understanding, and inclusive interaction are better positioned to develop sustainable and adaptive leadership practices. In conclusion, this review underscores that what shapes leadership is not simply who leads, but how leadership is communicatively produced and socially constructed through interaction. Future research is encouraged to extend this work by employing longitudinal, qualitative, and multi-level methodologies to further explore the dynamic processes through which leadership emerges across diverse organizational and cultural contexts.

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